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PRESS RELEASE

Massachusetts NAEP Results Lead Nation for 12th Year

Only state with top results in math and ELA in grades 4 and 8

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The Nation's Report Card



MALDEN — Massachusetts fourth and eighth graders scored on top once again in reading and mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam, marking the seventh consecutive time the Commonwealth's students scored first or statistically tied for first on the NAEP tests, the Baker-Polito Administration announced today.

Massachusetts students have scored first or statistically tied for first place on NAEP tests in fourth and eighth grade reading and math since 2005. According to the 2017 results, Massachusetts tied for first among other states in fourth and eighth grade reading and mathematics while scoring well above the national average on all four tests. Hispanic students and black students in Massachusetts fourth grade classrooms had their highest average scale reading scores ever in 2017.

The NAEP test – commonly referred to as “The Nation’s Report Card” – is administered every two years to a sample of fourth and eighth graders.

“Massachusetts is proud to be a national leader in education. I am pleased to see our students, teachers and schools scoring high marks once again, including record scores for Hispanic and black students,” **Governor Charlie Baker said.** “Our administration is committed to delivering a quality education to every student in every ZIP code, and we will continue to strive for excellence to make our state the best place to learn and grow.”

“We are so pleased to see that Massachusetts fourth and eighth graders continue to score so well in reading and mathematics,” **Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said**. “These scores are a testament to the hard work our teachers and students put in every day.”

In eighth grade reading, Massachusetts was the state with the top scale score (278), statistically tying with New Jersey and New Hampshire, while all other states scored lower. Compared to 2015, Massachusetts’ eighth grade reading scale score increased by a statistically significant 4 points.

Scores in fourth grade math and reading and eighth grade math all held steady. The results reflected a trend in the nation as a whole, which saw eighth grade reading results increase by a statistically significant one point while eighth grade math, fourth grade math, and fourth grade reading held steady.

Massachusetts fourth graders had an average scale score of 236 in reading, statistically unchanged from 2015 (235) and above the national average of 221.

In math, fourth graders scored 249, statistically unchanged from 2015 (251) and higher than the national average of 239.

Massachusetts’ test results were a mixed bag for students with disabilities and English learners. While both saw gains in eighth grade reading and held steady in fourth grade reading, both fell at least slightly on the math tests in both grades.

“I’m pleased to see our national standing, but we need to consider areas where we appear to have plateaued,” **Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley said**. “Standing still will not help all of our students be prepared for opportunities after high school.”

“We are very happy that we continue to be first in the nation in every category, and the narrowing of the achievement gap among black and Hispanic students in eighth grade reading since 2015 is particularly pleasing to see,” **Education Secretary James Peyser said**. “That is a dramatic improvement since the test was last administered. Now the challenge is to maintain that trajectory.”

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in core subjects. The assessment tests representative samples of students in all 50 states and reports state-level results for grades 4 and 8. In Massachusetts, 3,400 grade 4 students were randomly selected to take a NAEP reading assessment, and 3,500 were selected to take a math test. In eighth grade, 3,100 students were selected to take reading, and 3,100 were selected to take mathematics.

This is the first time that NAEP scores are from a [computer-based test](#). The scale for NAEP reading and mathematics scores ranges from 0 to 500.

According to the 2017 NAEP results, Massachusetts fourth graders had an average scale score of 236 in reading, statistically unchanged from 2015 (235) and above the national average of 221. In math, fourth graders scored 249, statistically unchanged from 2015 (251) and higher than the national average of 239. In grade 8 reading, students scored 278, statistically higher than in 2015 (274) and higher than the national average of 265. In eighth grade math, students scored 297, which was the same as in 2015 and higher than the national average of 282.

Other 2017 NAEP results for Massachusetts students included:

Grade 4 Reading:

- Massachusetts had the top scale score (236). New Jersey scored statistically the same as Massachusetts, and all other states scored statistically lower than Massachusetts.
- Massachusetts was one of only 20 states to see their fourth grade reading score increase, but the increase in Massachusetts was not statistically significant.
- 51 percent of all Massachusetts fourth graders scored Proficient or above, significantly higher than the national average of 35 percent and not statistically different from 2015 (50 percent).
- In 2017, Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest average scale score (247), followed by white students (243), black students (219) and Hispanic students (217).
- 64 percent of Asian students scored Proficient or above, as did 60 percent of whites, 29 percent of blacks, and 29 percent of Hispanics.

Grade 8 Reading:

- Massachusetts was the state with the top scale score (278). New Jersey and New Hampshire scored statistically the same, and all other states scored lower.
- Massachusetts was among the majority of states that saw an increase in eighth grade reading scores. In Massachusetts' case, it was a statistically significant 4 points.
- 49 percent of all Massachusetts students scored Proficient or above, significantly higher than national public of 35 percent and 3 percentage points above 2015 (46 percent).
- In 2017, Asian students had an average scale score of 292, whites 283, Hispanics 259 and blacks 258.
- Black students, Hispanic students and Asian students had their highest scale scores and percent score Proficient or above ever in eighth grade reading in 2017.

Grade 4 Mathematics:

- Students in Massachusetts and Minnesota had the top scale score (249). Virginia, New Jersey, Indiana, and Wyoming scored statistically the same, and all other states scored lower.
- Although Massachusetts' score went down 2 points in fourth grade math, most other states also saw a decrease in that grade and subject.
- 53 percent of all Massachusetts students scored Proficient or above, significantly higher than the national average of 40 percent and 1 percentage point lower than in 2015 (54 percent).
- In 2017, Asian students had an average scale score of 262, whites 255, Hispanic 234 and blacks 229.

Grade 8 Mathematics:

- Students in Massachusetts had the top scale score (297). Minnesota scored statistically the same, and all other states scored lower.
- Massachusetts' score did not change in eighth grade math, while most states saw an increase in that grade and subject.
- 50 percent of all Massachusetts students scored Proficient or above significantly higher than the national average of 33 percent and 1 percentage point lower than in 2015 (51 percent).
- In 2017, Asian students had an average scale score of 323, whites 303, Hispanics 274 and blacks 271.

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